

Chapter 30 Organization

RMA Multi-Agency Coordinating (MAC) Group

Rocky Mountain Area Multi-Agency Coordinating (MAC) Groups should be activated at the local and Geographic Area levels whenever wildland fire activities are affecting more than one agency or there is competition for incident resources. There may also be a need for the Geographic Areas to activate MAC when the Fire Preparedness Level is at 4 or 5. Responsibilities of MAC Groups at all levels include the following: (Refer to NMG 30 and RMG 20)

- Determine priorities.
- Allocate/reallocate resources.
- Develop/recommend contingency action plans.
- Issue coordinated situation assessments.

MAC Groups at all levels should create and adhere to the Multi-Agency Coordinating Group Activation Plan. This plan contains information regarding trigger points at which the local MAC Group should be activated, who will participate, and what each of their roles and responsibilities will be.

Current participants in the Rocky Mountain Area Multi-Agency Coordinating Group are: BIA, BLM, USFS, FWS, NPS, States, and their constituents. Agency MAC Group representatives will normally be Agency Directors, FMOs, or their representative.

RMA MAC Group Coordinator

| BIA | BLM | FWS | NPS | STATES | USFS |
|---|----------------------------|--|--|--------------------------|--|
| Southwest Region Cal Pino | CO Ken Kerr | Mountain / Prairie Region David Carter | Inter-Mountain Region Mike Davin | CO Rich Homann | Rocky Mountain Region Mark Boche |
| Great Plains Region Dave Hall | WY Jeff Fedrizzi | | | KS Ross Hauck | NE Don Westover |
| Rocky Mountain Region Bob Jones | | | | SD Blair Dunn | |
| | | | | WY Ron Graham | Bill Ott |

Depending on the fire location and agency involvement, representatives of the following agencies may be included in the Area MAC organization as liaison or primary members:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Bureau of Reclamation | Military Installations |
| County Government | National Guard - RMA States |
| Disaster Coordinators for RMA States | Rural Fire District |

Directors' Delegations

The BIA, BLM, FS, FWS, NPS, and State Directors in the RMCG have written delegated authority from their respective agency heads to represent their agency on all matters related to wildland fire operations. This includes membership on the Rocky Mountain Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (RMACG), determining area priorities, and allocating/re-allocating incident resources.

Multi-Agency Coordinating Group Functions & Inter-relationships with other Groups or Organizations

Multi-Agency Coordinating (MAC) Group consists of designated individuals who are supporting or directly involved with an incident and have authority (direct or delegated) to establish fire priorities and commit resources from their agency.

Background: In fire suppression, the command and support functions each have specific objectives crucial to successful operations. While they are separate functions, they must coordinate and cooperate to create an effective fire suppression program.

Multi-agency coordinating groups are an expansion of the coordination and support management system of the Incident Command System (ICS), which provides support for on-the-ground organizations. As wildfires or other incidents increase in numbers or complexities and the involvement or impact on other agencies increases, day-to-day coordination and management must expand to ensure efficient and effective use of critical personnel and equipment. The command function is designed to manage on-the-ground incident operations. Area Command, an expansion of the Incident Command function, is primarily designed to manage a very large incident or multiple incidents with multiple Incident Management Teams. Area Command, like MAC Groups, can prioritize incidents and allocate scarce resources within their respective areas.

MAC Groups

(Refer to RMG 10)

MAC Groups can function at all levels of the organization and should be established at the level where decisions should be made. Timely activation of a MAC group at a lower level will often eliminate the need for a higher MAC level. Normally, a MAC Group will be activated when an emergency situation significantly impacts or involves other agencies. At this point, agency representatives are brought together to relieve the expanded dispatch organization of the responsibility for making key decisions about the sharing and use of critical resources.

The purposes of the MAC Group are to:

- Make timely decisions so appropriate actions can be taken. Thus, it is imperative that MAC Group participants have a fundamental knowledge of the issues and be able to listen, comprehend, and decide. They must understand their agency standard operating procedures, work well in a team setting, be dedicated to a consensus approach to problem solving, and be open to all agency needs. MAC Group participants must have well established credibility so their decisions are respected.
- Improve the information flow and interface among involved agencies when numerous incidents occur at one time or when large incidents are rapidly depleting resources.

- Develop a single, collective approach to establishing priorities regardless of functional or geographic responsibilities.

To ensure its ability to make necessary decisions in a timely manner, the MAC Group must have a strong, well defined delegation of authority, regardless of the organizational level of the MAC Group. At the national level, the delegation of authority will come from the national director(s) of the involved agencies, from the line officers at the Geographic Area level, or from the agency administrator(s) at the local level.

The group must work within normal dispatching channels and must not get involved in suppression tactics on individual incidents. They must function within existing authorities and agreements.

Any agency may activate the group when they feel there is a need to prioritize the allocation of resources or incidents.

When the MAC Group has been organized for an incident, it is imperative that continuity be maintained by properly notifying the affected unit(s) that the group is functioning; i.e., positions filled, resources coordinated, time frames, and types of status reports required from Units and Rocky Mountain Area Coordination Center (Refer to RMG 10 for mission statement and RMG 30 for the organization chart).

Each fire or incident is managed by an Incident Commander using a normal organization tailored to incident problems. It is essential that the MAC Group operate within the Agency head's delegated authority in establishing priorities of action and allocation of resources. The MAC Group must work in harmony within established dispatch channels and keep free of suppression strategy and tactics on individual fires.

The MAC Group shall keep fully informed on such matters as:

- Number and locations of significant incidents, by unit.
- Values at risk and special problems involved.
- Name of Incident Commander on each incident and, in general, the staff capabilities and the suppression forces assigned.
- Cooperating agencies, personnel, and facilities working each fire.
- News and public information facts.
- Fire weather—present and long-range predictions.
- Probability of more ignitions.
- Suppression progress on large fires and/or groups of small fires.
- Depletion of Zone or Area resources.
- Sources of additional resources, both within the Area and nationally.
- Fire danger and status of units not actively involved with incidents.

The two functions of a MAC Group are decision making and providing direction. This information is distributed in the form of new or modified policies, procedures, standards, methods, and/or guidelines.

MAC Groups should function at the level respective to that of the incident activity. For example, if several local jurisdictions are being heavily impacted, a local MAC Group should be established to set priorities and allocate resources. If an Area Command is established to handle a particularly complex incident or a number of incidents, the local MAC Group would set priorities and allocate, or reallocate, resources between Area Command and other incidents.

The National MAC Group serves in this role on a national basis while activity is ongoing. When activity escalates in one or more areas, the group prioritizes resources among areas. While MAC Groups at lower levels are activated as needed, the National MAC Group must function at all times because of the possibility of fire activity in one or more areas at any time.

Geographic MAC Groups make the day-to-day decisions, implement actions, and set priorities among incidents when activity has substantially escalated. Area Interagency Mobilization Guides specify responsibilities and conditions for MAC Group activation.

MAC Group Roles and Responsibilities

- Overall situation status information
- Incident priority determination
- Resource acquisition or allocation
- State, Federal disaster coordination
- Political interfaces
- Overall coordinated information provided to the media and agencies involved
- Anticipate the future condition

Specific MAC Group Functions

- Ensure that the collective situation status is provided and current by agency.
- Prioritize incidents.
- Determine specific resource requirements, by agency.
- Determine resource availability by agency and the need for gathering resources in a mobilization center.
- Determine need and designate mobilization and demobilization centers.
- Allocate scarce/limited resources to incidents based on priorities.
- Anticipate future conditions and resource needs.
- Review policies/agreements for resource allocation.
- Review need for other agencies' involvement.
- Provide necessary liaison with out-of-area facilities and agencies as appropriate.
- Critique and recommend improvements.
- Identify fiscal issues/concerns.

Needs of MAC Groups

Local area MAC Groups can provide greater efficiency to fire suppression organizations while relieving coordination centers and dispatch centers of heavy workloads during active situations. Care should be taken to ensure that local MAC Groups do not become involved in incident operations but restrict their activities to support functions.

Conclusion: The MAC Group is a valuable and necessary component of fire suppression operations. Although it may be established at any level, it may be underutilized at local and geographic area levels. The higher the organizational level of the MAC Group, the more dependent it becomes on lower levels. While the National MAC Group provides national coordination, it is totally dependent upon lower levels for incident status information. The decisions are only as good as the information that has been provided. Incomplete or erroneous information from lower levels will result in inefficient resource allocations and poor priority setting.

During an incident, many variables can affect production and results. One key element is span of control. It is critical to the success, effectiveness, and safety of incident personnel. The span of control and quality of supervision, including supervision guidelines, must be constantly evaluated. When setting priorities and allocating resources, MAC Groups must consider span of control and its effect on safety and productivity. Failure to allocate resources to ensure safe, effective span of control can have serious impacts on incident management organizations. At the same time, it is the responsibility of the incident management organization to ensure that only the best, most qualified supervisors are placed in critical positions and that span of control is not exceeded regardless of resource availability.

RMA MAC Group Position Descriptions

(Refer to NMG 30)

Agency Fire Management Officers, herein referred to as Rocky Mountain Coordinating Group (RMCG) members have delegated agency authority to:

- Establish priorities for resources on fires;
- Allocate critical resources; and
- Reallocate critical resources when necessary as situations change.

When the fire situation reaches critical levels with impacts on two or more units, RMCG may recommend establishing of the Interagency Fire Coordinating Group. Normally, the group shall recommend the establishment of a MAC Group that would normally meet in a central location and assign one member to serve as the group's Coordinator.

MAC Group Coordinator works in concert with the Center Manager to assure area needs are being met, as well as that MAC decisions are implemented. The Coordinator has overall responsibility for MAC operations.

Roles and Responsibilities of this Coordinator follow:

- Fill and supervise necessary unit and support positions as needed in accordance with coordination complexity.
- Arrange for and manage facilities and equipment necessary to carry out the MAC Group functions.
- Facilitate the MAC Group decision process by ensuring the development and display of information that will assist agency reps in keeping abreast of the total situation. Provide the data necessary for astute priority setting and allocation of resources.
- Implement decisions made by the MAC Group.
- Establish minimum support organization including situation unit leader and note recorder.
- Replace RMCG Fire Duty Officer when MAC Group is activated.

Center Manager coordinates between MAC and the area logistical support organization.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Center Manager follow:

- Works closely with NICC and other Area Center Managers.
- Keeps the group currently informed.
- Implements priorities as outlined by the MAC Group.
- On a daily basis, briefs units and area dispatch organizations of current and anticipated situations and priorities.

Plans Coordinator acquires intelligence information through normal dispatch channels for all incidents.

Roles and Responsibilities of this Coordinator follow:

- Assembles information in a manner suitable for major decisions.
- Makes recommendations for group's priority and decision process.
- Keeps MAC informed of overall incident situations and decisions of the group.

Administrative Coordinator keeps the group informed on fiscal matters.

Roles and Responsibilities of this Coordinator follow:

- Keeps time for all MAC members.
- Arranges for clerical support to all team members.

Logistics Coordinator coordinates interagency support.

Roles and Responsibilities of this Coordinator follow:

- Coordinates interagency support services.
- Establishes staging areas as needed.
- Maintains awareness of fire cache issues.
- Keeps Plans Coordinator informed.
- Anticipates future requirements and prepares advance plans in order to meet critical shortages.

Air Operations Coordinator coordinates air operations at airports and heliports.

Roles and Responsibilities of this Coordinator follow:

- To ensure policy and safety requirements are adhered to.
- Works closely with Agency Aviation Officers on individual agency policies and safety issues.

Information Coordinator acquires information on all incidents in the area.

Roles and Responsibilities of this Coordinator follow:

- Gives special attention to avoiding duplication of effort and creating excessive impacts on incidents and units.
- Coordinates special feature stories and news media releases.

Military Liaison coordinates closely with dispatch and all military providing incident resources.

Roles and Responsibilities of this Coordinator follow:

- Is responsible for the procurement, coordination, and demobilization of all military (Regular, Reserve, and National Guard) personnel, equipment, and supplies needed during emergency situations within the Area boundaries, as provided under current support agreements.
- Serves as a primary contact between military headquarters and the MAC Group.

Finance Coordinator reviews business and financial management practices of the group.

Roles and Responsibilities of this Coordinator follow:

- Advises on legal and fiscal requirements.
- Assists the organization in utilizing the full range of fiscal authority needed to procure critical supplies and accomplish other tasks in a timely manner.

Safety Coordinator coordinates safety of the overall operations.

Roles and Responsibilities of this Coordinator follow:

- Reviews overall operations with respect to safety.

- Makes on-the-spot checks of incident activities and recommends to appropriate personnel changes in order to improve safety.
- Schedules, performs, and documents general safety inspections and keeps MAC Group informed.

Frequency Coordinator coordinates frequency use.

Roles and Responsibilities of this Coordinator follow:

- Reviews overall operations and coordinates all emergency frequencies to ensure proper usage and distribution.
- Works closely with the FAA, FCC, and National and Geographic Area Frequency Coordinators to develop an Area Frequency Management Plan and determine frequency priorities.

The group is responsible for expanding the purpose of the organization as needed. The existing coordinators shall be notified when the interagency positions are to be filled. Within the interagency organization, each coordinator is responsible for filling positions as needed. During initial buildup, one person may be assigned two or more positions. The Center Manager shall keep units informed as the Area MAC Group is established.

As the Area MAC Group is expanded, the organization chart shall be revised and distributed. Names, positions, and a telephone directory shall also be provided.

Incident Support Organization (ISO)

(Refer to NMG 30)

Expanded Dispatch

(Refer to NMG 30)

The Expanded Dispatch function of the ISO relieves the host agency's dispatch unit by focusing exclusively on the large or complex incident(s).

Expanded Dispatch Functional Areas:

- Overhead
- Crews
- Aircraft, Logistical
- Equipment
- Supplies

The volume of orders and complexity of the incident(s) determines staffing levels and the degree of expertise required of the expanded dispatch organization. In less complex situations, one dispatcher can handle more than one functional area. Additional personnel may also work within the expanded dispatch, such as data entry.

The **Expanded Dispatch Supervisory Dispatcher** is a facilitator accomplishing the direction provided by the Center Manager or Fire Management Officer who has delegated authority from the agency administrator. Facilitation is accomplished by adequately staffing and supervising the operations of the expanded dispatch

organization, maintaining positive and effective liaison with the host agency incident management team(s), and assist in clarifying the roles and responsibilities for the ISO and the host agency dispatch unit as needed. The individual filling this position must be a qualified expanded dispatch supervisory dispatcher and capable of performing all functions within the expanded dispatch organization.

An Expanded Dispatch Coordinator is normally assigned in the most complex situations; ones where there are considerable external influences affecting the ISO, a local MAC Group is in place, or where span of control within the ISO and/or expanded dispatch becomes an issue.

(For Expanded Dispatch Position descriptions refer to 310-1 NWCG Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualifications System Guide).

Technical Support

(Refer to NMG 30)

Administrative Support

(Refer to NMG 30)

MAC Group Coordinator

(Refer to NMG 30)

Complexity

(Refer to NMG 30)

Example Organizations

(Refer to NMG 30)

Incident Support Organization, Example

(Refer to NMG 30)

Incident Support Organization, Example-Complex Incident

(Refer to NMG 30)